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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE PRIMACY OF LOVE.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 18–24.

Paul's words in the opening of Corinthians look like an indiscriminate defiance of all intellectual excellencies; for he sums up, under three titles, the significant names of intellectual development. "*Where are the wise?*" Or, in our phrase, Where is Grecian philosophy? Where is that wisdom which developed itself in the schools of Greece?—it was to Corinth that he was writing. "*Where is the scribe?*" The scribe represented the Hebrew scholar—the man who was cultured in all civil and religious knowledge among the Jews. "*Where is the disputer of this world?*" By this, doubtless, is meant the dialecticians, whether among the Jews or among the Greeks—the sophists—the men who instituted disputations along the streets, and everywhere throughout the cities. Those men that live by the development of intellectual truth, whether among the Jews or among the Greeks, in regular forms of schools and philosophy, or in

SUNDAY MORNING, March 29, 1874; immediately following the adjournment of the Congregational Council, convened at the call of the *Church of the Pilgrims* and the *Clinton Avenue Congregational Church*, for discussion of the forms of order and discipline in the *Plymouth Church*. LESSON: 1 Cor. xiii. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 247, 1,261, 1,225.

irregular and peripatetic forms—where are they? God has made them seem foolish by the presentation of Jesus Christ, who is the power of God in the world.

Now, I am far from understanding this as meaning the degradation of reason or of reasoning, on the part of the apostle; for he uses reason and reasoning himself pre-eminently. It does not deny nor undervalue the uses of the intellect, in the promotion either of science, of philosophy, or of knowledge more generally. It does not undertake to say that these things are of no validity. It does not touch that question. It is not a declaration that the grand Christianizing processes of the world can take place without the use of the human intellect. It is this: the assertion that in the work of regenerating the world mere intellectual forces are secondary, subsidiary, auxiliary; and that the power by which the human heart is to be transformed, and by which the race is to be carried up until it is in the likeness of God, is the power of the heart.

I understand, then, in a large interpretation of this passage, that it is a declaration of the primacy of disposition, or heart-power, in the great work of elevating the human race. Not, however, to the derogation of the intellect, but to the derogation of its arrogant sense of superiority. Men will not be changed from their lower flesh-nature into their higher spirit-nature by any amount of intellectual reasoning. When men are transformed, it will be because there has been breathed into them a disposition which will change everything in them.

It is not, then, that we are called, in this declaration of Paul, to choose between intellect on the one side, and misty feelings of emotion and tender impulses on the other. We want them both. The question is as to their rank. Which is the superior? Which serves the other? Are we to use the disposition for the sake of glorifying the intellect, and making men knowledgeable creatures; or are we to use the intellect as an instrument and a servant for making men good, pure, just, loving, true? In which is man's manhood—in his intellectual force, or in his moral nature? As to that, there can be no question; for Christ declares that

the fruit of the Spirit is the foundation of the Law, and that it is love to God and love to man. He says that on this stands the whole Scripture. He says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." The fruit of the Spirit, as he represents it, consists in joy, and love, and faith, and peace—not knowledge.

In that matchless thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians which I read in the opening service (and one can scarcely tell whether it be a sonnet or a discourse, yet, whatever we think of its form, its spirit is the Charter of the Christian Church)—in that matchless chapter Paul himself brings the question to terms, and says that all knowledge, all prophecy, all power of teaching and discerning, all faith (that kind of operative faith by which mountains might be removed; that kind of faith which consists in the strengthening of the human will as a means of exerting immense force), all self-sacrifice in the way of zeal, all fidelity to a man's side or party—that all these things are relative. Knowledge is relative. When you know all possible things, you only know them in spots and particulars. It is not given to man to understand either the nature of the world in which he dwells, or all its relations to the universe. And when we rise out of the childhood of this life into the manhood of the great life above, we shall find that all the particles of knowledge over which we swelled with pride here were but parts and fragments, and that we knew as little of the whole system of creation as the wandering Bedouin knows about the old Assyrian civilization.

"Now we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part [the partialisms or relativities of this mortal life] shall be done away."

In this universal scattering, death shall take all things which the intellect has cognizance of, because they are partial, the scope of the intellect being partial. There is a sphere of our existence, a great treasury of truths, which is far beyond our reach; and when we rise out of this nascent state; when we leave this school on earth, and go into that other life, we shall find that the things which men most pride themselves about have disappeared. Those things which the

scribe and philosopher in this world think to be so important are things of which, as we stand looking at them in the world to come, we shall say, "When I was a child, I did think as a child; but now that I have become a man, I have put away these childish things."

You might just as well attempt to persuade Newton to go back into the nursery and play with a string and a top, as attempt to persuade any wise soul that has escaped from this life into the heavenly sphere to go back to the questions and arguments which made him so proud in this world. They have gone down to nothing there.

And yet, in the decadence of convictions, in the waste of imperfect faiths, in the destruction of these proud schemes of philosophy, there are some things which are not going to pass away. Love abideth—yea more, faith and hope, as well as love. When the auxiliary and all-helping understanding shall in the other life be convicted of its fatuous follies, there will rise up the reality of our manhood—its disposition—that which we mean by "the heart." That is going through life and through death, and will emerge in the other life. It will not be relative to the constitution which belongs to us here. It will not be shredded away, but will go through the processes of translation. That which remains of us steadfast after death is the heart, and that which changes at death is the understanding and its knowledges.

The end to be sought in this life, then, is the suppression of the passional man, of the animal dispositions, and the development of the germs of heart-life which are planted in the soul. We are to unfold in this mortal sphere Christ-like dispositions.

Now, what was Christ as our Exemplar? I am not asking what were the relations which flowed from his appearance in time. Neither am I asking what his relations had been to the anterior and invisible. I am not asking what were his relations to that with which arrogant men think themselves to be so familiar—the universal nature and government of God. I am not asking these things, because we are ignorant of them. I do not know, nor does any man know, what these relations are; and no man should be audacious enough

to profess to know. There are other relations in the death and sufferings of Christ than those which we can interpret. But we can understand those which are obvious—those which are clear to our powers of comprehension. Christ appeared in order to call man from his lower life of the flesh to his higher life in God. His appearance was a manifestation of that higher life in himself, showing men how the great new spirit-life was wrought out, and how that life centered itself in love; and he declared to them a new commandment.

In words, the commandment "Thou shalt love" was not new; and yet, it was a "new commandment." It was new, not in mere externals, but in the scope, in the function and in the primacy then for the first time given to it.

Love is the central power. It is that which subjugates the passions, and opens the soul's sensibility to God. And this is to predominate; this is to suffer; this is to inspire and work out truth, justice, purity, and liberty in itself. And so, being made the great architect of the work that God has to perform in the human soul, the disposition, centering on love, and representing it, and being inspired by it, is to be the architectural force by which the world is to be reconstructed in wisdom, in doctrines, in rules, in regulations. It is to develop in the souls of men the greater divine element of love until its force is such that out of it shall be evolved all elements of truth, of justice and of liberty.

We want to know what to steer toward. If it be true that men must steer toward earth first, if it be true that they must steer toward exact right-believing first, we ought to know that. If, on the other hand, men are to steer first for those grand dispositions which are manifest in Jesus Christ, the gift of God to the world, teaching that the central force of the universe is love, and that by love he is to re-create this lower sphere, then let us know that. Some men stand saying, "First pure, and then peaceable." As if that were the order of development in time! As if a man had no right to be peaceable until he was pure! As if the world would not be like a vast squabbling menagerie of animals let loose, if they could not be peaceable until they were first pure! As if

liberty were not the term which represents the consummation of all other processes!

It is the putting of this heart disposition over against the mere force of knowledge that is declared to be God's method. This is the power which will subdue the world. The conditions which are required for it, however, must be complied with.

In the first place, if divine benevolence, divine benignity, divine sympathy, or in other words the great truth of the divine element of love breathed into the human soul, is to redeem men from animalism, and lift them up into the sphere in which they shall be in unison with God, it must be developed with a fervor which has scarcely been known hitherto.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Men stand shuddering over against that command, and say, "It is impossible to obey it. Nobody can do that. That is metaphorical, and has to be taken in a general way." But there it stands from age to age, and declares that the power of God in this world is to be made known in the development in the human soul of this creative force of love; and every household on earth says, mutely or whisperingly, "Amen." Where is there anything which rises up from the animal so near to the spiritual as father and mother? Where are there schools, where are there parties, where are there sects, where is there anything on earth that does the work of overcoming the lower nature and fortifying it against all temptation, and blossoming out of it the higher, the sweeter, the benignant element of love, like the household, which is the primitive church, and the model of the church? It responds, "Thou shalt love, or thou art not worthy to be child; thou shalt love, or thou art not worthy to be brother; thou shalt love, or thou art not worthy to be sister." And having grown up out of family, having grown through new alliances, "Thou shalt love" stands at every threshold of permission. Over every door leading to amenities and liberties, stands, "Thou shalt love." In the path which leads to the joys and the happiness which belong to wedded souls,

stands "Thou shalt love." Everywhere in the course of the upward development of men, stands this great commandment of the universe: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," coupling, by its thousand threads, mankind, in every sphere of life, and in every stage of development, from the lowest to the highest, and giving continuity to all human experience.

Now, to call the world to love is a very different thing from calling the world to orthodoxy.

Repent of your sins, and forsake them. Well, that is comparatively easy. To repent of and forsake a man's sins is nothing but to plow under the weeds, and let the ground lie fallow. That is a great deal better than nothing; but it would be poor farming, I take it, if a man were running his farm on that principle. There would be no weeds, but there would be no harvest. We are called to repentance, and we are called to new purposes of life. Well, purposes of life are quite indispensable; but no man ever throve on purposes. Yes, but we are to serve God. What is serving God? You are converted: where is your evidence of conversion? Does it consist in this: that you are born into such a spirit of kindness and love that that is the one controlling element of your nature? Are your pride and your selfishness obliged to lie down at its bidding? Is your taste inspired by it? Is your imagination colored by it? Is your will subordinate to it? Is it the one element that, like the sun, gives light, and lustre, and beauty, and form, and proportion to everything about it? Is it your central experience? "Thou shalt love"—is that the law by which you are governed? Have you been born into that? Many and many a man has been born into zeal, into faith, into orthodoxy, into partisan church-ship, into aspirations for eternity; but no man is really born that is not born into love. All developments are miscarriages until you are born into that.

Even this love is not sufficient when it is only born as a babe. It must creep before it can walk; and it must creep fast in order to learn how to walk; and it must walk fast in order to learn how to run, and fly, and come into perfect

ascendency. It is the only one thing that has a right to enslave a man. There is nothing else that has a right to crown itself, and say, "I am sovereign in the human soul." It is that which is of God, and goes again to him, in all its tendencies, and bears in itself, more than the conscience does, the right to be a vicegerent of God.

No man preaching righteousness alone, no man preaching rectitude alone, no man preaching virtue alone, no man preaching wisdom alone, no man preaching taste and beauty alone, preaches the whole Gospel. These are but the fringes of the great truth of Christ which lies in this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." You may have everything but that, and have nothing; and you may have that, and, though everything else is imperfect, that is the recreative force which will make it perfect.

With fervor, then, it must exist. Where it has existed, it has been in single isolated cases; it has been sporadic; it has not been the one central doctrine of the church; nor has it been the public sentiment of Christian communities from the beginning.

Many have held that in the process of regeneration a man must be brought to a condition of attention; that he must be arrested in his feelings; that he must be serious; that he must be convicted; that then he must be converted; that then he must rejoice; that then he must feel right; that he must have faith; that he must have activity; that he must try to do good; and—oh, yes, that he must have love, too, as one among other things—as one of the graces. But that is just the wrong view; love is *the* thing, it is the *one* thing, out of which are to sprout and root all other things good and wholesome.

Nor must it be an occasional exercise. It must have in it continuity and universality. This beneficence of soul must be proof against the soul's own self.

Never a monarch sat on the throne that there were not a dozen others who wanted his crown; and while love sits regent, especially in its minority, the other faculties seek to

usurp its place. Pride comes in a thousand ways, and reaches out its hand for the crown, saying, "Get thee behind me, Love, and tell *me* what to do." It has usurped the place of love, and it is the better able to keep that place, because it is pride gilded with love.

Or, there comes Veneration in the same garb, stooping low, twin-brother of Fear, cousin to Superstition, and says, "Love, put off the shoes from off thy feet; this is holy ground; stand thou aside; thy light is too glaring; darken the window; put away all worldly and glittering realities; let men stand in mystic twilight; for I shall control the soul. Love, be thou a trembling star on my horizon, that I may be a hemisphere." So veneration is a usurper.

Beauty also comes, claiming that the universe was made for esthetic elements, for harmony, for innocent pleasures, and joys that spring therefrom; and therefore she, the sense of taste, of fitness, of fineness, assumes to be regnant in the soul.

Yet, after all, the word of the Lord standeth sure. There is but one commandment which is central, and that is love. Sit thou, O Love, on the throne, and rule in the name of God, thy Father. Thy sway must be supreme,—if need be arbitrary,—and continuous,—until the very end.

More, there must be an atmosphere created of this feeling. It is not in the power of any individual to develop his faculties to the highest degree until he is brought under the influence of correlated developments, so that he shall have not only the help which comes from his own will-power, or from the strength of his own faculties, but also the stimulation which comes from the magnetic force of like faculties in other men. For no joy of one man alone is like the joy of a thousand men. No single voice is like the voice of a great multitude. No solitary impulse of patriotism is like the impulses of patriotism in a great people. And we can never know what love is, in its highest form, so long as it is like a single wax candle in a saint's shrine burning by itself. You cannot know what is the love of God in this world while it is manifested by one here, and another there, with distances so great that the interstitial spaces between are void. But when

churches are pervaded with the consciousness that the thing which Christ came to develop was the principle of self-sacrifice, of suffering, and of benevolence; when there is a universality and continuity of this spirit of love, so that churches shall feel it, and be filled with it, so that the voice which goes from one church to another shall be the voice of love when they are gathered together in their assemblies, and so that the one crowning experience shall be love, souls yearning for each other, and gleaming light upon each other from the varied shining facets of their lives, this love forever changing, forever growing, and being forever new and fresh—then its effect will begin to be felt. When the atmosphere which is created by love is such in a whole church that every man in it believes that he is what he is, not by his own organization and education and endeavors alone, but by reason of this feeling among the brethren, then you will begin to know what its power is. Love, if it is to subdue the rebellious passions in men, must find those passions weakened under its influence.

But is this the atmosphere of churches? Now and then the light of a revival pours into a church, and men do rise somewhat along the scale of love, and there is fellowship and good-will one toward another, and there is enthusiasm in co-operative labors of benevolence, and all discords die out, and old quarrels are settled, and stubborn hatreds disappear of themselves. The light and warmth of love at times are like the summer sun in March and April, which destroys that snow which all the winds could not blow away. On special occasions all things go down before it; and for moments we have an intermittent experience of what a church would be if all its members were inflamed with a spirit of love.

And suppose that not only one whole church, but all the churches of any one great denomination, had this spirit as a prime element of faith continually burning within them! If you have that spirit of self-sacrifice and love, you are right, and are in affiliation with God. If you have it not, you are so far wrong. You are wrong, not in proportion as you vary from articles of faith, and not in proportion as you go from this heterodoxy toward that orthodoxy. True orthodoxy is rightness of heart. Orthodoxy is nothing if its pervading and

controlling element is not love. If orthodoxy is to be of any value, it must bear blossoms as well as leaves, and fruit as well as blossoms; and that fruit must spring from a loving disposition. And in order to reap the full fruition of love, it must be atmospheric and continuous. And when it is the fashion for men to manifest this feeling at all times; when it has currents, and electric influences, and communal forces overhanging the church and the community as a summer-brooding atmosphere overhangs a continent, then it will have power to subdue the passions and appetites in men.

But more, love must, by the example and stimulation of the church, be exalted and made a working force in society. Broad social relations must be cast according to its directions and determinations. All civic and judicial proceedings, all police arrangements, all affairs of legislation, all conduct of business, also, must be guided and controlled by this same element before it will have its perfect work in the world.

I am not speaking of the possibility of bringing about this result to-day or to-morrow; but such is the ultimate tendency. And, when love is the crowning virtue; when it is the main experience of the individual; when it is the great element of churches, by which one is joined to another; when it is the atmosphere in which the processes of society are developed and carried on; when we recognize, at all times and in all places, that selfishness is heterodoxy, and that love is orthodoxy; and when the public sentiment of the whole community is surcharged with this divine principle, then will come in another and a final element—namely, that of heredity.

You cannot re-create the world so fast at the adult end as you can breed sinners at the childhood end. If men are to be born into life with such disproportion of disposition, and with such malformation of body, if whole generations of men are to carry in themselves the sins and the tendencies of sin which have been accumulating for generations back, then you cannot convert them so fast as to make any great headway in the world; but, as moral qualities are transmissible as well as immoral qualities, when the church has done its duty and society is leavened by the spirit of love, then there will

be, as a part of the co-operative plan of God's providence, larger and larger proportions of children born into life with this great principle more and more clearly recognized than it was even in the days of Moses, when, as we are told, in the Old Testament, blessings were sent down from parents to children, and to their children's children. Men will be started in the world on a higher plane, and in a condition such that the animal faculties will be brought under the control of the moral and spiritual faculties more and more easily. And at last, under the inspiration of the providence of God, and under the influence of the church of Christ, operating together, the true gospel will be established. I do not despair of the time when the earth shall be filled with men who are centered on love, who are governed by love, and who through love govern one another.

I remark, then, first, in view of this development of the love-disposition, in all its forms, that the intellectual elements will help indirectly. Increase of knowledge as to the conditions of a man's life, his structure, and the best conditions of society, with all its forces—this tends to build up the outward form of our life. It throws its light on the true lines of development.

Far, therefore, should it be from any wise man to deride the progress of scientific knowledge. What we affirm is, that this knowledge is not that which is to convert the lower man, the ordinary flesh-man, into the spirit-man. Nothing will do this but the disposition of love.

We recognize the value of thought; we recognize the value of exactitude of statement; we recognize the value of the discovery of the arrangements of the truths of scientific research; we hold that true religion demands the growth of man all around, and, if possible, consentaneously; but after all, the central element of manhood lies not in the direction of knowledge, but in the direction of disposition. The intellect is not the master: it is the servant. Dealing with matter, it is more nearly independent than under any other circumstances; but the moment the intellect has to do with the facts of interior human life, with the conscience of man, with nature in its most highly developed form (for nature de-

veloped means man and mankind)—that moment it is itself the subject of the lower faculties.

A man can understand only that of which he has something in himself. If a man has goodness in him, then goodness flashes into his intellect, and he discerns it. The intellect is dependent upon the disposition. If it be a problem of truth, justice, humanity, rectitude, or large benevolence that is to be looked at, the intellect is absolutely obliged to stand and wait till the disposition throws its light into it, in order that it may interpret its nature. The intellect therefore is subordinate. This is the very antithesis of Buckle's theory.

Secondly, the Christian forces of the world to-day are struggling, like Esau and Jacob in the womb—quarreling as to whether or not the world's religious growth is to stand in its outward relations and regulations and doctrinal lines, or not. That is the struggle of the churches to-day. You may look through Christendom and you will find that there is everywhere a high and a low party—a party of liberty and a party of authority—though neither party altogether realize what they are doing or know what they mean. The struggle of to-day is not between two parties—one that represents selfishness, and arrogance, and pride, and self-seeking, and the other that represents love as the central element, and demands that everything else shall be under its control; though that is the battle which must be fought out before the Lord shall reign in the hearts of men. But the conflict of the time indicates the rebellion of thinking religious men against the bonds with which ecclesiasticism seeks to hold them bound.

Look at the struggle in the Roman church abroad. What mean all these fitful outbursts in the direction of liberty under the lead of Père Hyacinthe and his German colleagues, in which men attempt to break away from the restraints of an external system which surrounds them? The quarrel is between the liberty of man's understanding and authority in externalities and in faiths.

Look at the condition of the Church of England. It is broken up into some four sects. If you were only to cut one

or two of its hoops, four churches would spring out of the Church of England to-day. There used to be a time when the Presbyterians and Congregationalists had their little pet quarrels on hand, and when the Episcopal church used to open its great slumberous doors, and say, "O brethren, come into this harbor of peace, and rest." The time was when they had good rest. They slept soundly! But they do not extend that invitation to those of other denominations any longer. It is too sarcastic. It would be absurd to throw open the great cathedral doors of England, and say to anybody, "Come in here, so as to get out of dispute and debate." Why, there are four fighting armies on the field spiritual there to-day.

Go and look at the condition of things in France and Germany, and see what the struggles of Christianity are. See how largely they are external. See how much is being written which relates merely to its outward features. See how all the schools are studying back along through books and libraries to establish the usages of the past. See how everybody is working to ascertain what are the relations of Papacy; what is the right of bishops; what is the condition of the ministry; what is the status of the priesthood; what is the nature of the organization of the church; what is liberty in a church; what is servility in a church; how far the observance of ordinances should be carried; what is right or what is wrong on this, that, or the other subject.

The whole Christian world to-day is embattled on these externalities; and the power of the church is not now, any more than it has been at any other time, concentrated in this: *Man must be like God in loving.*

Now, there will never be a conversion of this world until there is an enthusiasm of love; until men at last understand that the kingdom of God comes without observation; until it is recognized that Christianity may make use of anything which will promote its objects, but that it does not stand in external forms, in governments, in orders, in ordinances, in a priesthood, in the ministrations of the sanctuary, nor in scholastic appliances of any kind; until men believe that the kingdom of God is within them, and that it is made up of

the fruits of the Spirit—love, peace, joy, humility, and good-will toward men. If you throw this out, you throw everything out. You may erect your cathedrals till they kiss the heavens with gold, you may build your altars till they glow like the rainbow, you may drape your priests, and let them walk in solemn processions, you may have your songs, your chants and your music in the sanctuary; and yet, without love these things are nothing, or are like the bubble which the boy blows, which he tosses in the air, in which he sees his face for an instant, and which is then gone forever.

And after two thousand years, in which the example of Christ has been held up to teach the world what love means, how much does the world know of its meaning? Love means willingness to suffer; it means what the mother in her heart feels toward her babe, who will perish in the snow, or in the sun, or in the flame, to save that babe which is dearer to her than her own life—it means all these things; but who will ever learn it? O ye that will not learn it of Christ, will ye not learn it of motherhood? Love that counts itself nothing, love that is a force for good and for happiness; love that is patient, bearing all things, enduring all things, believing all things, and waiting, without envy, without jealousy, without vanity and without incivility; love, with all its wondrous traits—where have you ever found a church that was filled with it? Where have you ever found a denomination that was marked off from other denominations by the essential predominance of this quality? Here we are sending our missionaries to the heathen, and quarreling at home! [Applause.] Yes, you enjoy it when I lay it on others, but you are just as bad as they are. There exists yet the old essential depravity. It is that which has wrought woe, and mischief, and blood, and tears, and suffering, and torments unutterable, since the world began. In the name of religion the rack has ground bones to powder. In the name of religion, the priest has blown the taper, and put it under the faggot. In the name of religion men have been cast out of home and out of country. In the name of religion men have been thrashed with flails, poisoned with serpent fangs. In the name of religion there have been criticisms

and agitations and persecutions endless. In the name of religion there has been every spirit manifested but that of patience and gentleness and sweetness and love, which brings a man into God's bosom, and brings the bosom of God among mankind. That we have not seen. God so loved the world that he gave his son to die for it; but we have not yet learned to appreciate and to appropriate that dearest gift. The love of Christ was manifested in this: that he died for men while they were his enemies; but we have not yet learned what that was. And we are not in danger of going to the extreme in that direction. Our trouble does not lie in this: that the hoops are not tight enough on the church barrel. It lies in this: that the hoops, being tight enough, are on empty barrels, or on barrels in which the wine has turned to vinegar. And yet we go on coopering, and coopering, and coopering, driving the hoops down here, and driving them down there; and, after all, when we look on the inside we find nothing there that is worth keeping. This, in my judgment, is the sin of the world. In the times of men's ignorance God winked at their sin; but we are born to a better day than they were, to better light, to better instruction, to better uses. It is not enough for you to be as good as men were who lived five hundred years ago. Your business is to be infinitely better than they were.

One thing more. While I speak of the relative subsidence of all external things, or their subordination to divine love in the human disposition, you must not understand me as undervaluing auxiliaries; you must not interpret my words as meaning that it does not matter what a man believes, and that there is no difference between one form of organization and another; but I say that where the heart of the individual and of the whole church is surcharged with the spirit of God, it is the nature of that spirit to act on the human understanding, and rectify what aberrations there may be in all instruments, and fill every heart with this divine element. You cannot think right or do right unless you have the principle of love at the root of your thought and action; and with that principle you cannot go wrong. It is the helm of the soul. It is the pilot by which God is to guide this old

staggering world through all darkness and all storms into the haven of peace and rest. Under its guidance the world will go right; but without it mankind will still have the same wearisome strifes that it has ever had.

The church is never much more than a bucket of water dipped out of the ocean. The water is the same in the bucket and in the ocean; but in the one case it is in the bucket, and in the other it is in the ocean—that is all. You are in the church; yes, but your nature is the same that it was when you were in the world. You are as greedy for money now as you were before. You are in the church; but you are as proud and sensitive about the infringement of your rights as anybody. You are not willing to lie down that some other man be the better for it; you are not willing to surrender your place and your dignity in order that others may be lifted up and benefited; you are not willing to prostrate yourself under the foot of an enemy because it will make him a better man to tread on you; but Jesus said, "I am the way," and generations have trodden on him to find heaven and glory. How many men say, "I will give my life, if need be, for the cause of humanity," and go and do it? Men talk about knowledge and about eloquence; but what are words, what is philosophy, what is learning, what is the intellect itself, as compared with this one flame of God, this all-cleansing, all-nourishing, all-guiding love, which, when a man has it, makes him suffer for others, and makes him humble himself and bow down before others, in order that he may show that spirit which was in Christ? When once love is supreme in the church, and such Christians are in it, the salvation of the race will not linger nor delay.

Christian brethren, I feel, from day to day, in the nearness of the kingdom that is to come, and in the beauty and glory of my God in Jesus Christ, how poor and worthless are the assaults and victories which racket about us here. They are hardly worthy to be considered. The dear thoughts of God toward us are worth more than all the thoughts of mankind. How we shall serve Christ by love, and how we shall in our turn be Christlike toward men, whether they love us or hate us—these questions transcend in importance, to you

and to me, all questions of empires, all questions of science, all other questions. He that is humblest, he that is meekest, he that is most like a little child—I take him, in the name of Jesus, and place him in your midst, and say, "Honor the childlike heart, the heart that gives up, the heart that sacrifices its pride and interest for the sake of another's welfare. It is the soul that can lay down its weapons of pride, and not the soul that can take up and wield them, that is nearest the kingdom of God, and the best representative of the Master. And when this spirit of love shall once be contagious, infectious, and atmospheric, then we shall hear the word of God sounding through the heavens, and saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

And then, O earth, the scowling cloud that has overhung thee shall be struck through with light, bearing the colors of heaven. Then, O world, groaning and travailing in pain until now, thy tears shall cease, and thy groans shall be ended. And little by little, as birds begin to sing in the morning, first one, and then three, and then five, and then a score, and then a hundred, and then all in the whole region bursting forth, so there shall go up from out of this world single strains of joy and triumph, and then more, and then still more, until at last they shall roll as the waves of the sea and the thunders of heaven, as the voice of a multitude, or as the sound of mighty waters.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We beseech of thee, our Father, to lift us up above the dominion of our senses, and above the influence of care and trouble, and the sound of things upon the earth, into that sacred stillness where thy Spirit communicates—into that realm where we know thee, and know not how we know. Breathe upon us the inward tranquility and silence of the uttermost thought and feeling, that God may beam in upon us things celestial.

Grant, we pray thee, this day, such a sense of the glory of our inheritance, such joy unspeakable, such gladness in view of that life which waits for us, and such a sense of the gentleness of Christ, of the infiniteness of his love, of the wonderful tenderness of his compassion, and of the transcendent patience and gentleness of his administration, that we shall seem to ourselves surrounded with all the forces of the infinite and of the omnipotent, and with all the glory and wisdom of the life above, so that we may not stand for a moment in any sense of our own wisdom, or power, or excellence. For to us there is something better than that—the love of God; the bosom of thy kindness; thy disposition of goodness. How sure a refuge it is! and how blessed are they who are able, in opening their eyes, to behold thy face smiling upon them, and saying to them, In me is thy strength.

Lord God, if thou art willing, we are at last made willing in the day of thy power. We strive by all the strength that is in us to lay aside our pride; thou knowest that we have battles with ourselves; and though we are so small, and so far away from thee, none of our strifes and struggles are insignificant in thy sight. Thou knowest that we strive to lay aside selfishness, and all its hateful brood; and thou beholdest with what ill success we labor; and thou seest how we lift up feeble hands, tired at the oar, and pray for that wind from thee which shall waft us against the forces of our nature, and the forces of life and corrupted society. Thou knowest how we are bestead by the powers of the world around about us, and by the princes of the power of the air. Thou art not ignorant of the host of temptations which are brought to bear upon us. Thou beholdest how all our most precious senses and faculties beguile us, and lead us away from the true path. Thou seest how strong we are toward the things of the flesh, and how feeble we are toward the things of the spirit. Our helplessness is such that we seem to ourselves like children that have been lost on a ship, and are in the midst of the mighty deep, with the storm above them and the waves around them, and with nothing to save them. O Lord, our God, thou art the Saviour of Israel. Not by what thou hast done, but by what thou art, and hast been from all eternity, thou art the Saviour of the lost. This is thy Godship, this is the meaning of thy holiness, and this is the great truth of the sanctuary of thy nature—that thou dost love the unlovely, and strengthen the weak, and bring back the wandering, and restore the souls of those that have gone astray; and that by the power of goodness thou dost inspire goodness; and that by everlasting love thou dost wait patiently for the healing of every soul, and for its formation in thine own image.

Now, we worship thee, and rejoice in thee. We praise and magnify thy name, not because we must, but because our souls do ache within us to give back to thee something of that which we feel that we are receiving in overmeasure every day and every hour. And if all the flowers of the field by their fragrance do not cease to speak of their dependence upon the sun that created them, what should be the volume of the praise and joy which should go up from the multitudes of flowering hearts which thou, Sun of Righteousness, hast, with the kindling of thy beams, brought into life and beauty? Oh, that there might be a wider sense of thy presence in us! Oh, that there might be a joining together of heart to heart! And as we humble ourselves, and are conscious of our weakness and our littleness, Oh, that a tide of gratitude might flow forth to-day, the songs of heaven mingling with the songs of earth in praising thee, Lord God Almighty, in love, and wisdom, and power, for what thou art, and for what thou art doing.

And now, we beseech of thee, that thou wilt glorify thyself by the services, by the sacrifices, by the suffering, by the joy, by the life, by the activity, by the standing still of thy servants—by all their experience. And we pray, to-day, that thou wilt fill them with such a sense of thy goodness to them, and of the graciousness of thy love to them, that they shall have no other feelings but those which shall rise spontaneously into the feelings of God himself—that our thought, and our feeling, and our will, and all our affections may be swallowed up in thine.

O, bring near to us the other life. Dear Lord, there are many souls that are very sick, and that would be healed if they might but once look into thy heart. There are many who are filled with pain: reach down one leaf from the tree of life that they may find their usual strength. There are many who cannot see thee because the images of their dear children are in their way: through their beloved let them see thee come forth to them, bearing their infants in their arms and blessing them again. There are those who stand in solitariness, and hardly know their own soul in its fitful griefs and wild mazes of suffering: thou Comforter, who hast dealt with sorrow from the beginning, canst thou not deal with their sorrows and bereavements?

Behold those, we beseech of thee, who seem toiling in vain; who are borne down by burdens which are heavier than they can bear; whose hearts are filled with innumerable cares and troubles. O, thou blessed One, thou that canst bring forth from the mute earth and dead matter things which are rare and beautiful, canst thou not, from the spent and parched soil of souls, bring forth all sweet and pleasant experiences? May the wilderness bud and blossom as the rose in many a dry heart!

Lord Jesus, we beseech of thee that thou will revive thy work here again. Show forth, we pray thee, thy power, as in days gone by, and fill this house with rejoicing, not for ourselves, but for the excellency and the glory of thine own name.

Now, we pray thee that thou wilt teach us, more and more, lessons of trust, lessons of peace, and lessons of contentment, in the way of the Lord God toward us, and lead us in thine own way, so that we may not stumble nor be beyond the reach of thine hand, or the hear-

ing of thine ear, or the throbs of thine heart. We pray that thus we may walk, fulfilling the errands of God in this life, till the hour of our departing shall come. Then, O thou that hast known the way of death, and through it the way of triumph, become our God; and when we walk the valley of the shadow of death may we fear no evil. May thy love inspire, and sustain, and comfort us.

Nor would we stand praying alone for ourselves. Look upon thy people of every name; upon all thy churches; upon thy ministering servants everywhere; and grant that this may be a day in which the hearts of all thy people shall be filled with a sense of God present—Immanuel.

O Lord God, wilt thou revive thy cause everywhere. Bless those who, in far-off and destitute places, toil in weakness, and sickness, and with hope deferred. Help them that their faith may not fail. Be with those exiled ones who are in the midst of the poor and the ignorant, and without companionship, and under the scorn and even the rejection of men, seeking still to imprint the image of Christ upon the souls of such as are lying in darkness. Lord, breathe their reward upon their souls in that peace, in that faith, which never shall fail.

Draw near to all those, we pray thee, everywhere, who are seeking to build the ways of men upon a purer morality, and to inspire a nobler manhood. Grant thy blessing to all those who are extending the bounds of human knowledge, and are endeavoring to build up the foundations of human life more and more compactly. And we pray that thou, who art the Guide of mankind and hast been from the beginning, and that art marching from triumph to triumph unto eternity, wilt let thy providence, which has inspired and guided thy people in all times, bring forth in this nation and in every nation the peaceable fruits of righteousness. From the brightness of thy coming may all darkness flee. And with darkness may ignorance go, and superstition, and cruelty, and every evil thing. May all the earth see thy salvation.

And to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless us in the truth, and bring to us a sense of our own deficiencies of knowledge—not knowledge of ideas, nor of things, but above all, knowledge of self-sacrifice and of humiliation for others' sake. Make us feel how base we are in our selfishness. We call ourselves Christians; and yet how far we are from perfection! How many faults we have! O Lord, we beseech of thee that we may be more and more mellow, and brought into that love, like Christ's, which was willing to lay down its life a ransom, by its sufferings, for those who were not only sinful, but arrogant and inimical. We pray that thou wilt fill this church, and fill all the churches of the city, and all the churches of our land,

with this divine impulse. Oh, how weak we are! Pitying, waiting God, how wonderful is thy long-suffering! Yet, give not up the work of thy hand. Thou that art the Author, be the Finisher, of the faith of thy people. And finally, when we have gone through our own discipline, and our own limited life, and are called, and we fly upward with joy, imperfect as we are, ransomed by the love of God in Christ Jesus, may we find ourselves joined to those who have gone before to the General Assembly and the church of the first born; yea, may we find ourselves joined to thee, O Jesus. And we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

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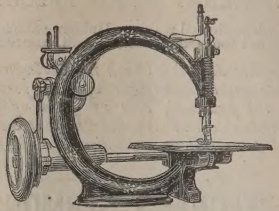

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